

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 6395

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH JACOBO TIMERMAN

1. ON SEPT 20 I LUNCHEDED WITH THE OWNER OF LA OPINION, JACOBO TIMERMAN. SURPRISINGLY, WHEN I RAISED THE QUESTION OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN ARGENTINA, TIMERMAN REPLIED THAT THERE WAS NO SUCH PROBLEM HERE, AND THAT CONCERN OVER THIS LARGELY IMAGINARY PROBLEM RESULTS FROM THE OVERRREACTION OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE THOUGHT INDEED THIS ACCOUNTED FOR A GOOD DEAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONCERN OVER THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARGENTINA. IF, HE SAID, IT COULD ONCE BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE WAS NO PROBLEM OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN ARGENTINA, WE WOULD SEE A SIMULTANEOUS COOLING CONCERN ABROAD IN OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS SINCE JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS WOULD THEN LOSE INTEREST.

2. ON THE PRESENT OVERALL POLITICAL SITUATION IN ARGENTINA AND WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO HOW WELL THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING, TIMERMAN STATED FLATLY THAT THE MAIN PROBLEM AND OBSTACLE LIES IN THE INFIGHTING AND PALACE INTRIGUE NOW GOING ON BETWEEN THE ARMY AND THE NAVY AND AMONG VARIOUS CLIQUES WITHIN ALL THE SERVICES. TIMERMAN STATED IT SEEMED TO HIM THAT THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE SERVICES OCCUPIED 90 PERCENT OF THE JUNTA'S TIME AND THAT IT INTERFERED WITH THE PROGRESS OF ALL NEW GOVERNMENT PROJECTS AND

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PERSONNEL CHANGES. PRODUCTIVE ACTION BREAKS DOWN, HE

CLAIMED, BECAUSE "THE ARMY WANTS TO PAINT THE NAVY GREEN
AND THE NAVY WANTS TO PAINT THE ARMY BLUE."

3. TIMERMAN SAID HE SAW THE JUNTA DRIFTING TOWARDS A NEW CORDOBASO
OR EVEN EVENTUALLY SOMETHING FOLLOWING THE LINES OF THE PORTUGUESE
SITUATION.

4. COMMENT: I FOUND TIMERMAN'S EFFORT TO EXPLAIN AWAY ANTI-
SEMITISM IN ARGENTINA TO BE SOMEWHAT PUZZLING. POSSIBLY THE
PROBLEM HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT OVERBLOWN BY SOME ORGANIZATIONS THAT
ARE QUITE NATURALLY CONCERNED. TO SUGGEST THAT IT REALLY IS
NO PROBLEM, HOWEVER, SIMPLY FLIES IN THE FACE OF HISTORY AND
OF THE CONCRETE FACTS FISIBLE TODAY. THE MACHINE-GUNNING OF
JEWISH STORES AND THE BOMBING OF SYNAGOGUES AND JEWISH CIVIC
CENTERS MAY NOT INDICATE THE BEGINNING OF A POGROM, BUT THEY
CERTAINLY DO INDICATE THAT THERE IS REPEAT IS A PROBLEM.
THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADDRESSED ITSELF TO THAT PROBLEM, AND I REALLY
DO NOT SEE WHAT TIMERMAN WISHED TO GAIN BY SUGGESTING THAT IT
WAS ALL SOMEONE'S IMAGINATION.
HILL

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